

## TO ESTABLISH THE CONCESSION SOCIETY ISSUE

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*Editorial Board's comment: Concession is one of human's qualities formed in communication culture. Hence, it is a study subject of Social psychology. Culture sociology, Ethics and some other sciences can consider it as their study subject. However, in order to discover deeply and trace the nature of this subject, Social psychology must be used as a main research method.*

*As quality is phenomenon of spiritual life, in everyday life, concession attitude is mainly adjusted by **moral, habit, custom and conduct culture**. However, in economical, political, legal relations, concession attitude has the opportunity to express or make impact. Concession culture in Vietnam lacks of economical, legal and political relations. And that is what to talk about.*

*This article is not intended to study the issue under the above idea. The main issue that the author wants to pose is: Today, in communication in general, at all levels, it lacks of a quality – which is now very serious and dangerous – which is **concession**. Or when expressing in different way, it is **concession quality, concession culture, concession communication habit, concession behavior**. Any expression is reasonable in its own way. Perhaps because in any expression, the social spiritual life will reveal that shortcoming – **concession**. When comparing with the wider society, this lack can be seen more clearly and is more pressing.*

*This article does not focus on analyzing complicated aspects of the issue, it only raises the first feelings of this lack in Vietnam. We think these warning, awakening feelings are necessary for the future researches to study the issue more deeply.*

*We appreciate this article in terms of questioning about establishing a **concession society**. This is a correct, urgent and meaningful question. We hope other authors will response to this issue to futher research in different aspects. If the researches show early results, it can prevent the lack of concession, its intense and extreme versions such as scrambling, robbing etc. will be adjusted*

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*and go back to the normal state of a cultured society. By doing so, the society will become a better place.*

*The Editorial Board hope to receive articles in response to this issue*

### **I. Concession culture in communication in some countries**

Having the opportunity to observe concession culture in communication in some countries such as the U.S, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea etc., we have some comments as follows:

*The smallest thing to be said is the queuing culture.* People who come first will line up first, to be served first; people who come later will line up behind, to be served later; a long line of patient people, no one intends to jostle or push any one out; all are happy to wait for their turns without a complaint or an expression of discomfort. Even in case the "leader" queues behind the "staff", it must still follow the order, there is no way that people will "respect the boss" to make way. Even if it is so, "boss" will not dare to take because of the look of those around him. In their mind, it is *the cultural norm of a normal society.* *Going against this is ignorant.*

*Observing their behaviors in traffic culture* also makes us to ponder: giving way is always the top priority; even giving others way when they do not drive in accordance with law. Pedestrians feel *respected*, there is a sense of *security*.

*In work relationship*, the sense of helping, sharing of expertise, responsibility in handling job requirements is always their top priority. People who come to work, especially foreigners, are always welcome in a *loving - communal attitude*.

Phrases like *sorry, nice to meet you, see you again...* are always in each conversation.

People always have in mind that they should have civilized behavior. Everyone feels ashamed of themselves when they have any behavior, even the smallest, not in accordance with normal behaviors or affecting other people.

Everyone has the attitude of concession.

However, that does not mean concession is unprincipled. In any nation, any era, there will be areas where concession does not mean telling something *wrong* when it is *right*, bending the law or abandoning the good, acting against conscience.

### **II. Community communication in Vietnam**

*- Compete for small benefit*

Recently, many newspapers, conferences, seminars have voiced

about the painful phenomenon of Vietnamese culture, making those who consider themselves cultured feel ashamed: jostle, scramble, press on each other to ask for seal in Trần Temple, ask for loan in Bà Chúa Kho Temple which caused many people fainted, injured; push down school gate to get children's school admission; chaos to eat sushi for free; scream and scramble for 100,000 VND buffet meals; fight with each other for every single free raincoat; stampede to purchase discount goods; neglect people in distress to loot in traffic accidents; doctors who show emotionless to patients;... (Hạnh Nguyễn, 2013; Phan Tân, 2014).

*- Compete in driving - queuing*

Many people in our society seem to only wait for a chance to “violate” regulations, laws, break the inherent order. Queuing “concept” seems unfamiliar with Vietnamese. In traffic habits, whenever the red light is ending (the green light is not even on), at the intersections, everyone tries to... “honk loudly”. Riding on pavement, encroaching on the wrong lane have become habits that are difficult to give up for many people. Only a small congestion can immediately make them “weave in and out traffic for their own sake”... it is up to an extent that the Chairman of Hanoi had to admit at a meeting to summarize the work of urban traffic order that, “nowhere has chaotic traffic like Hanoi” (Quang Phong, 2014). Giving way, helping

people with disabilities, pregnant women, small children,... seem to only exist on regulation boards, slogans, callings. When witnessing traffic order in Vietnam, foreigners see it as their new discovery. A German journalist posted on website Welt an article titled “Traffic in Hanoi – a perfectly normal madness”. Comparing with Laos – “land of million elephants”, he called Vietnam “land of million horns”, and even wrote: “*Every Vietnamese drives recklessly, forming the general style that no one gives way to the other. Because everyone thinks the same so it is normally okay*”, and “*concession shall be deemed to get yourself in accident*”

(<http://tuanvietnam.net/2010-09-10...>).

And American journalist Llewellyn King, posted an article on Huffington Post saying “Traffic in Hanoi is one of the wonders of the world” (*Dân Trí* Newspaper, dated 4/1/2015).

Hawkers on the streets, people who encroach pavements to sell foods on the street... compete for seats, selling space, refuse to give even half the brick; ready to quarrel, even beat or curse each other despite they are both in violation of public order. At railway stations, bus stations, there are plenty of people who cut the queue and jostle others out to buy tickets, then they jostle others even when getting in and out of the bus or train; even when they already have tickets, seat numbers which means nobody can scramble with them, they still do not want to

queue, still jostle, trample on each other.

All of those actions are as expression for the motto taken to heart “Wise people live, stupid people die” (Giang Lân, 2012).

*- Violence in resolving relationships*

Here, we do not talk about mafia gangs killing each other and brutal robberies of professional thieves, we only consider the most normal communication, relationships in daily life where violent behaviors can be seen at any time, any place. One might stab each other because of a look said to be “malicious”, an “unpleasant” word; kill each other because of a small “collision”. The habit of using violence even spreads to civil servants, even a deputy director of a department behaves like a thugs (Nguyễn Đức, 2014). On the websites, occasionally, clips of female students fighting startle many parents, and “it is still happening despite many penalties were given” (Tráng Vũ, 2014). The acts of violence of people against public officials are not rare in the society...

Somebody says, nowadays, time is precious like gold, so giving up to the other is impossible or no longer exist. But according to our observation and feeling, people compete with each other not because of precious time, but because *they no longer know how to give up to each other*. Public communication culture in Vietnam has never been deteriorated like today.

We agree to here statements: “That’s how Vietnam is” (Hoàng Ngọc Hiến), this is the common situation in Vietnam; now in Vietnam, how a crowd become crazy because of a very small bargain has become normal. Now in Vietnam, even in the most peaceful time, people still like to hustle, push each other...

**III. What is the cause?**

- It is suggested that we seem to have no queuing culture. Vietnamese did queue up since subsidy period but it was not like any other; the behavior of “line up brick” have distorted the culture of waiting. Hence, until now, when life is better, people still do not queue in a civilized manner.

The lesson “Two goats passing the bridge” is included in moral education for young students. No one would remember. But apparently, it is only a lesson of two goats, it cannot be absorbed into the concession culture of Vietnamese.

Classes on Traffic Law always guide in details on the principles, practical situations when joining in traffic, including how to concede oneself for each other, such as giving way to pedestrians. However, there are not so many people remember this lesson and Traffic Law is not strict enough to deter this case.

It is suggested that confidence in the fairness in sharing (distributing) has been put to the bottom; if they do not jostle and queue seriously, will they get

their share? If there is concession, it is only the case when “being forced to give to avoid bad luck”, “Don't trouble till trouble troubles you”. All concession, empathy are equated with the feelings of being lost or even humiliated.

- In an article about the queuing culture, author Nguyễn Quang Thân once explained: this scramble is derived from “food culture of the village” (Nguyễn Quang Thân, 2013). The thinking of “even a brief moment of fame is better than obscurity”, or “an early riser is sure to be in luck”, “The early bird catches the worm”... have been passed down from generations and still exist in the genes, blood and minds of many Vietnamese. When there is a chance, they will erupt to show other people. However, this opinion seems inappropriate for young people today, when they have more access to the outside world. They do not lack of “food” to the extent that they have to scramble. But it seems to stay in their mind, making them to do it as inertia. Some people even say “it is for fun” (!?).

Many people complain that, in schools, teachers mention queuing culture, but in the society, adults act in the opposite. Many parents try to teach their children queuing expresses civilization, but everyday the children still see the opposite, mostly by adults, *making them lose their direction of “culture values”*.

Vietnam's education has been criticized for being concentrate on competition and achievement; lacking of promoting the spirit of peace, humanity; our education lacks of educating the good. We can say that, it is an education that from family to society, all follow the spirit “Wise people eat/Stupid people are eaten” (Giang Lân, 2012), it is an “education of bullying” (Phạm Toàn).

- Many people doubt and question: do Vietnamese people prefer violence and only know to use violence to solve discord, disagreement, and dispute? Do they lack of faith in justice, in proper, indifferent, timely, effective intervention of law? And a sad reality is that when someone really wants to concede, help for no benefit, they are being suspected, like “it looks like they have some intentions with me” that is why they are good like that.

- However, “same those Vietnamese” when living, studying, working in civilized countries, they master the queuing culture, no one cuts the queue, they seem to come from somewhere else, it is not like they have just jostled in their country. Not only that they understand queuing is the quickest, most civilized and safest way, but they are also afraid of the look from other civilized people when looking at “non-standard” people. This implies that, individual's fault is just a small fault; fault of mechanism, of order is perhaps greater.

#### IV. Establishing concession society

##### 1. Correct conception of concession society

It is not forcing or misleading when we recall the notion of Buddhism culture. Buddhism teaches, establishing concession in four things: status – money – reputation - feeling. The society where people do not concede will be more disorder; people who do not concede, do not think for surrounding people, only think for themselves will be the cause of evil. That person will live in torment, without spiritual peace because of their scramble, aggressive thinking.

When being questioned *what a concession person is*, it is said that “it is a person who sacrifices their interest and happiness, who thinks for other people, who forgives others’ mistakes”. Actually, it is just the high demand of concession quality. In normal communication, the requirement of concession culture is more natural and simple.

According to Venerable Thích Chân Quang “Unlike forbearance which means keep calm when experiencing unwanted things, concession means to take good benefits for others”. “Concession is similar to almsgiving, they both about giving what you have to others. But... almsgiving, according to general meaning, often means sharing what you are having with others and still keep something for yourself... Meanwhile, concession has different

meaning. If conceding self for others, you no longer have it” (Venerable Thích Chân Quang, 2009).

Concession can be considered at least at two levels. *Conceding material benefits* is a great spirit, a voluntary sacrifice. *Conceding chance to speak, conceding way* is a behavior culture. Concession we are talking here is conceding benefits, better things to others. Concession should be the top priority and understood as normal behavior; it will not make yourself disadvantaged and weak, it teaches people a reason for living, practices a habit for good character, if not, inhuman result can occur like the tale “Two goats passing a bridge”.

##### 2. Right actions to establish concession society

- *Social action: education – setting an example*

If one is educated at an early age orderly, thoughtfully communication rules, it will help to form good personality and behavior. Education here means in both school and family. Reminding of bad habits is also one way of education. Adults always have to set example for children to look at and follow, from speaking, acting, behavior, lifestyle, moral, conduct, culture... Building communication habit and culture for children gradually will go into their minds and daily lifestyle as a positive habit. Parents set examples, everyone in the family says thank and concedes themselves will

give children sense of conceding themselves for others and it will become their voluntary actions.

When being in primary or secondary school, if a student is taught and practices the habit of queuing, not causing disorder on the streets, giving up food, no scrambling and having self-esteem when being matured, they will never have bad behaviors. In an experience of Japanese's queuing culture, witnessing a 9-year-old boy who did not receive his prioritized dry food because of his desire of fairness, a scholar wrote: "It's unexpected that a 9-year-old boy who is just in 3rd grade can teach an educated person with Ph.D. like me a lesson on how to be a man in the most miserable time. An incredibly touching lesson on sacrifice. I think a nation with 9-year-old boys who are patient, endure hardships and sacrifice for others is certainly a great nation" (Hà Minh Thành, 2012).

*- Social action: establishing responsible community*

We can completely agree with the calling: we are Vietnamese with the tradition of self-esteem and human morality as the foundation. Our lives are comfortably off and those lives will be even better, we will eat better foods and wear nicer clothes. We do not need to fight for a free meal, a new overseas food. We cannot live purely by our instinct, even in the most difficult time in life. We cannot be the joke before other people (Vũ Đức Sao Biển, 2013).

Public opinion has been very supportive of the article "Why is there no queue?" of *Tuổi trẻ* Newspaper (Công Nhật, 2009). Many comments from readers indicate that there should be resolute attitude, becoming social action: people who interrupt the queue will definitely not be served.

Or it is needed to build "concession culture on the street" (Hoàng Cửu Long, 2011). Traffic culture is very close to everyone in the community, building traffic culture right from yourself, your family and the entire society. It is the act of voluntarily abide by the rules, the act of giving way on the roads.

You can never get enough of law, law also cannot govern all living activities – all areas in the relationships among people, among communities. Thus, community life emerges moral, religion and culture. Each individual, each social group should act for the community; self-aware, set their own example, be kind, live righteously. "Make yourself a decent lifestyle" (Trần Văn Tuấn, 2014). Late Dr. Hoàng Ngọc Hiến once mentioned "righteous" lifestyle in Vietnamese subconscious wisdom should be evoked in the mind of every Vietnamese, unfortunately, this idea has not been widely empathized.

*- Public opinion orients action*

Public opinion is not an institution that forces to solve painful social phenomenon overnight. But the rising waves and their echoes can gradually absorbed into the consciousness of each

person if they can be more drastic and have clearer direction.

When we already have the concession culture, take concession actions, those things may not go into the subconscious or presented in our daily actions.

If each person denies themselves, the society will progress faster. A concession society will create a “Vietnamese style” in a different sense in the view of international friends. In a concession society, an important action is that everyone has to build their own “ashamed culture”:

- *Ashamed* because the country develops slowly, because it cannot compete with the world in terms of innovation, creativity, initiative.....

- *Ashamed* because we interrupt the queue just to fight for a trivial piece of food, the petty benefit, tarnishing the country’s image during the integration.

- *Ashamed* because a member in the community has deviant behavior affecting the community’s reputation.

...

It is now time for each citizen, each leader, each manager to define their own responsibility. Before waiting for macro change in the entire social structure, it is needed to have change starting from the single individual.

However, besides calling for concession, we also need to be alert that we cannot eliminate the competition entirely for development. Competition has different

nature compared to scramble. Scramble is a more intense version of the lack of concession. But competition does not contradict with concession. Besides concession, it is necessary to have the attitude of competition in manufacturing, business, product innovation; competition in invention for advancement, for everyone’s benefit □

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